

SELECTIONS

FROM THE

VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS

PUBLISHED IN THE

PUNJAB, NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, OUDH, AND
CENTRAL PROVINCES,

Received up to 6th May, 1871. —

POLITICAL (DOMESTIC).

The *Saharanpore Gazette*, of the 24th April, revives the question which lately was a leading topic in newspapers—viz., whether Urdu or Hindi ought to be the language of the Courts. The writer, while admitting that Urdu is the current language of the day, thinks that the character in which it is written ought to be superseded by Nagri, in order to afford facilities to the rural population in reading the orders and rulings of Government. Men versed in Persian and Urdu are rarely to be met with in villages, and, consequently, the inhabitants experience the greatest difficulty in finding a person to read to them the documents, summons, and other papers issued in their names from Courts, while much unnecessary delay ensues in obeying the orders. If Nagri were taken as the Court language, all this difficulty would be removed. In the writer's opinion, the attention of Government ought to be drawn to the matter.

The *Oudh Akhbār*, of the 25th April, under the heading "unfair dealing of the post-office," asserts that the Government of Jodhpore lately distributed *khilats* to its several agents and *kāmdārs* posted at Bombay and other places, in acknowledgment of the good services rendered by them to the State. A valuable one was sent to Shaikh Tajammul Husain, a gentleman of Mārahra in the Etah District, who, for the

last year and a half has been at Agra as *kámdár* on the part of the Government. This *khilat* did not reach its destination, not unlikely through improper dealings of the postal employees.

The same paper reports that, though the funds raised by the Municipality of Cawnpore amount to a large sum, the sanitary arrangements and improvements of the city are neglected by the members. In the writer's opinion, the attention of the Municipal Committee ought to be drawn to the following reforms:—

(a) Many places in the city which are lying desolate and in a disgraceful state ought to be peopled and repaired.

(b) Uniform houses should be erected on both sides of the new city road. This would make the bazar look elegant.

(c) The numbers of the police might, with advantage, be increased. They have of late done well, but, unless they are strengthened, an effective check to theft and other crimes cannot be ensured.

(d) The *takya*, or the place of burial, has been removed to a great distance from the city, which is a cause of great complaint to the Musalmáns.

(e) In the selection of members for the Municipal Committee, considerations of personal abilities should not be overlooked.

(f) In the new Generalgunj, or the market-place near the canal and the new city road, the roads become muddy and slimy after a shower. In the writer's opinion this state of things should be put to rights under special supervision.

(g) The gutter flowing through the city would be very serviceable to the inhabitants, and be converted into a canal of pure water if its sides were properly repaired and drains made on either side for sweeping away the rubbish of the city.

Under the heading "Mysore," the same paper states that cholera is fiercely raging in the city and its environs.

The same paper gathers from the *Bombay Gazette* that among the three bills recently produced before the Local Council of that Presidency there was one relating to a novel kind of tax—namely, a tax on feasts—each person giving an entertainment to 100 men and upwards, having to pay beforehand at the rate of Rs. 10 for every hundred guests. The editor remarks that in India there are no few gentlemen who, for the sake of their reputation, often give feasts to people of a whole city, town, or village, and that these must, in future, pay several thousands of rupees to Government before attempting to give such entertainments. He is of opinion that the tax will press very heavily on people of the middle classes, among whom it is customary that hundreds of persons of their fraternity gather together on special occasions; though there are several rich men who will pay it without reluctance. In a word, the editor approves of the tax, provided banquets with guests up to 1,000, or at least 500, were exempted from it.

The *Koh-i-Nûr*, of the 29th April, notices the same tax. It is asserted that the people of Bombay, as a body, are averse to this tax. In the writer's opinion, this aversion is just and proper. Government seems to be jealous of what little pleasure Hindustanis have left them, when they enjoy themselves together and with their friends. The tax will be burdensome specially to people of the poorer classes, who have to give feasts to their brotherhoods on religious and other occasions. These do not cost them more than 7 or 8 rupees for every hundred men, and it may therefore be imagined how hard the tax of Rs. 10 will be on them. Then, again, nothing is more common among the Natives than for parties of friends to meet together in gardens or other places, and amuse themselves with a repast of fruits and sweetmeats. Such persons will feel it very oppressive to pay a tax of 10 rupees.

It is also worth while to remember that there are several kinds of feasts. At some, for instance, the guests are treated simply with betel-leaves, and at others with fruits or sweet-meats alone. It will be no easy matter to determine which kind of feast should be liable to the tax, and which should be exempted from it. So also, it will often be difficult to find out whether at such and such a feast there were more than one hundred guests or not. It is also to be feared that people will devise means to evade the tax by feasting a certain number of friends below the limit liable to tax one day, and the rest after an interval. This plan will not be attended with any disadvantage except in so far that the pleasure which is derived by entertaining a party of one or two hundred friends at one and the same time will be lost. But, on the other hand, Government will have no opportunity of levying the tax.

The *Oudh Akhbār*, of the 25th April, contradicts the statement made by the *Star of India*, that since his succession to the throne, the Mahārāja of Barodah has wasted more than fifty lakhs of rupees in giving *khilats* and rewards, and in other extravagant acts of a similar kind. The editor has a high opinion of the administration of the State, and guarantees to convince such of his contemporaries as may think otherwise of their mistake.

The *Akmal-ul-Akhbār*, of the 26th April, under the heading "Muzaffernagar," reports that on the 23rd April, a marriage procession on its way from that city to Meerut was attacked by a gang of robbers at a distance of three kos near Mousah Begharazpore. The robbers knocked down the persons who attended the procession, wrested all their jewels and valuables from them, and then ran away. The marriage party was obliged to return to Muzaffernagar the same day, and lodged a complaint before the Magistrate, who instantly ordered the Inspector of Police to go to the place where the accident had happened with an escort of horse and foot, in order to trace the robbers. The Magistrate has since been informed that the rob-

bery was committed by the collusion of the Police, and inquiries are being made.

In its column of local news, the same paper writes that another marriage procession, which was marching from the city to Bahádurgarh, was plundered at a distance of two *kos* by a party of robbers, who wounded two men and carried away property valued at Rs. 1,500.

Two cases of theft are also noticed. One happened in the sudder bazar, in which a merchant lost goods worth Rs. 800; and the other in *Kúchanaichaband*, in which a Begam was robbed of property valued at Rs. 1,100.

The *Akhbár-i-Alam*, of the 27th April, has a leader on the impropriety of exempting persons from punishment for offences on the plea of their having committed them in a state of intoxication. It often happens that when a man, who has killed or wounded another, is arrested on a criminal charge, he urges the plea of drunkenness in his defence. This excuse has weight with the Subordinate Courts as well as the Sessions Courts, which, without fully examining whether it is true or false, and without making proper inquiries as to the particulars of the drunkenness, acquit the criminal. It is a well known fact that no few Hindustánis and Europeans guilty of homicide have escaped the penalty of the law by urging this plea—no retaliation being taken for the lives of the persons killed. This state of things encourages others boldly to commit such crimes, and it thus happens that they are continually on the increase.

In the writer's opinion it is proper for the authorities, in the first place, to make full inquiries in case of criminals of the kind under notice; and, in the second, to declare drinking and going out of one's house when drunk to be a legal crime, seeing that crimes of the darkest nature are not unfrequently committed in a state of intoxication. In other words, drinking and going abroad when drunk should be made subject to special

rules. And as there have also been instances of persons committing murder when at home, and urging the plea of drunkenness in their justification, it would be well if rules were also laid down for drinking at home, holding each family responsible for keeping watch over any member who should happen to drink to excess.

The same paper notices the assertion made by the Hon'ble J. Inglis before the Indian Legislative Council, that great severities and extortions are practised in the North-Western Provinces in the collection of the Income-tax, and the Viceroy's orders calling on the North-West Government to make inquiries as to these extortions. It is remarked that no good is likely to come from this inquiry. The higher authorities dislike having any appeals against the oppression brought before them; a remarkable instance of this was witnessed in the case of a Collector, who, when the suitors crowded round him, let loose his dogs at them so that it was with great difficulty the poor men escaped with their lives. Immediately afterwards the officer came to his Court and called out the names of the suitors, who of course were not present. This gave him a pretext for dismissing the appeal. Such being the case, there is every reason to believe that in spite of oppressions, the collection of the tax, appeals against it will be very seldom lodged.

The *Benares Akhbār*, of the same date, draws the attention of the authorities to the need of railing the top story of the tower in the city of Benares, known as *Madhodās kā Dharahrā*, and of covering it all round with thin iron net-work, so as not to interfere with the view. Without such a defence there is great fear of the persons going up the tower to take a view of the city falling down. Only recently a stranger lost his life in this way. The writer thinks Government will approve of his suggestion.

A correspondent of the *Panjābī Akhbār*, of the same date, reports the breaking out of a great conflagration in Barodah;

which consumed 8,000 houses all at once, and destroyed property worth hundreds of thousands of rupees. Some of the inhabitants, too, were burnt to death.

The same paper has a leader on the unequal justice dealt out by Government to Europeans and Natives in criminal cases. A communicated article on this subject was published in a number of the paper under review some months ago and noticed in the *Selections*, the gist of which was that, in cases of murder committed by Europeans, specious arguments of one kind or another are always found out by which the criminal is either wholly acquitted or else but slightly punished. A case recently came to the writer's notice, which confirms beyond a doubt the truth of the statement. A European soldier, who had lately thrown a Native lad from the canal bridge at the Lohari Gate (Lahore) into the stream beneath, and suffered him to be drowned, though, if he wished, he could easily have taken him out, has only been sentenced by the Chief Court to one year's imprisonment.

The writer contrasts this decision with that of a similar case brought before the same Court from Rohtak, in which the criminal was a Native lad of 13 years' old. The circumstances of the case were that while playing he threw a child into a well. This child wore some ornaments; but on its body being taken out they were all found, which clearly showed that the criminal had not done the deed for the sake of plunder: nor could the boys possibly be supposed to cherish enmity towards one another, seeing that both were yet in their childhood, when no such feeling can possibly exist. Under these circumstances, the criminal deserved to be acquitted, or, if it were at all justifiable to inflict punishment on him, a slight one only ought to have been inflicted. As it is, he has been sentenced to imprisonment for life. What a pity it is that this poor lad should have been visited with such a heavy penalty for an unintentional and childish act, while the European soldier, who was a grown-up man, and had it in his power to

take out the child from the stream, has only been punished with one year's imprisonment. From these instances one can easily see how unequally Native and European cases of murder are decided by Government.

The writer is of opinion that cases such as the above should go up to the Lieutenant-Governor for final orders. He also draws the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjáb to the case of the innocent lad, and recommends that he should be freed from the heavy penalty of imprisonment for life.

The *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, of the same date, notices the scarcity of water in Amballa. Wells and tanks have dried up. This scarcity is said to be due to the imprecation of a devotee. In the writer's opinion, no plan is better calculated to remove this crying complaint than that of conducting a canal through the city.

The *Nur-ul-Absár*, of the 1st May, condemns the orders recently passed by the Municipality of Allahabad directing all brick and lime-kilns, situated at the outside of the city at a small distance from it, to be closed. The effect of these orders will be that the price of building materials, which is already dearer than in other cities, will grow so high that men will give up all thoughts of building *pukka* houses, and the city, which had of late begun to rise from its poor and humble condition, will remain the place of dirt and dust it is. The writer wonders that the members of the Municipality should always be devising ingenious schemes like the one to which he takes exception, which are so fraught with mischief.

The same paper notices the proceedings of a meeting recently held at Lahore with a view to discuss how the sum (Rs. 79,634) raised by the gentlemen of Lahore for perpetuating the memory of Sir Donald McLeod, late Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjáb, was to be spent. Some of the members were of opinion that the money should be laid out in building a memorial similar to *Lawrence Hall* or *Montgomery Hall*, and

that what amount might remain after defraying the cost of the memorial should be devoted to poorhouses and hospitals; while others suggested the desirability of laying out the money in founding an industrial school, which is a desideratum in the city.

The editor, in reviewing the above proceedings, praises the gentlemen of Lahore for paying so much attention to useful projects, and thinks it highly creditable to them to have raised a large sum of about eighty thousand rupees for a single scheme. As to the dispute about the way in which to perpetuate Sir Donald McLeod's memory, the editor favours the opinions of the party who propose to found an industrial school, which, he remarks, will last for ages to come, and confer a lasting good on the people far and wide; while a hall, besides being little useful to the public at large, will be subject to the ravages of time, which have already destroyed *Montgomery Hall*.

The *Shola-i-Tur*, of the 2nd May, remarks that while many obscene customs have ceased to exist in the country under the auspices of the British Government, the practice of singing improper songs at marriages, which is equally inconsistent with civilization and morality, is still fashionable to a great extent. So far is it from being regarded with disfavour that presents of money and jewels are offered to the women of the two families for singing the songs. Worse still, the more obscene the song, the better do the hearers like it. The practice is observed among the *Káyasths* with peculiar show and ceremony, and is more or less current among other castes and tribes in India in various forms. Even the Musalmáns of the country have adopted it from their Hindú brethren.

The writer thinks that the attention of Government ought to be drawn to the abuse, adding that, should it be unwilling to interfere with the practice on the plea of its being a national custom, it behoves the *élite* of the Native society to take mea-

asures for putting a stop to it. Munshi Pyare Lal in particular, who has done so much in checking extravagance at marriages among the people of his caste, will do an equally great service to them should he interest himself in banishing the filthy custom to which exception is here taken.

Opinions of the Native Press on the proposal of the Director-General of the Post-office in India to introduce a new kind of embossed envelopes, explained in his Circular dated 31st March last.

The *Dabdaba-i-Sikandarí*, of the 24th April, in reviewing the above proposal, remarks that the scheme in contemplation is hardly likely to remove the defects which it is desired to remedy, seeing that it does not affect bearing letters, which Natives are much more in the habit of sending than paid ones—being under an impression that the former reach their destination sooner and are less liable to be lost. Then again, the scheme proposed by the Director-General ignores one important defect which characterizes Native letters, viz., the *shikast* or contorted hand Natives are so fond of using in writing the addresses, which makes it very difficult to decipher them.

On the above grounds, the editor thinks that the scheme in question is not calculated to meet the object in view. In his opinion, the easier plan for ensuring the desired reforms will be for the Post-office to issue a notice and have it published in newspapers and hung at the doors of post-offices, and at streets and thoroughfares, for the information of the public, stating the size of envelopes to be used, with proper instructions as to writing the address in a plain legible hand, &c., and informing the public that all covers that are not of the prescribed dimensions, and are badly or irregularly written, will be rejected by the Post-office.

The *Benares Akhbár*, of the 27th April, is of opinion that people will think it oppressive to increase the minimum rate

of postage from half an anna to one anna, in case of letters not enclosed in the embossed envelopes, which it is proposed to introduce; and suggests that the better plan will be to reduce the limit of weight in respect of letters posted otherwise than in the new envelopes; in other words, it should be ruled that letters not enclosed in the new envelopes will be charged at the rate of half an anna for $\frac{1}{4}$ instead of $\frac{1}{2}$ tolah.

The *Samaya Vinod*, of the 1st May, approves of the scheme, provided a similar arrangement is made by the Director-General for bearing letters.

The *Shola-i- Túr*, of the 2nd May, in continuation of the opinion expressed by it in a foregoing issue, suggests that a wide publicity should be given to the scheme, not only through the agency of newspapers, but by means of letter-carriers. All such of these as distribute letters in villages should be ordered to inform the villagers all about the introduction of the new envelopes by means of printed notices, and what will be a still better plan, to secure the signature of the village lumber-lars and patwarees on a paper in attestation of their having received the information.

EDUCATIONAL.

The *Oudh Akhbár*, of the 25th April, notices the opening of a new school at Barodah, giving instruction to hundreds of boys. The writer hopes the Government of India will express its gratification at this proof of the Maharajah's patronage of learning.

The *Núr-ul-Abjár*, of the 1st May, reviews the *Annual Report of the Educational Department, N.-W. P.*, for the past year. The report is in two parts. Part I. contains the remarks of the Inspectors and Principals on the status of the several descriptions of educational institutions, endorsed by the views and suggestions of the Director of Public Instruction. Part II. contains statistical returns showing the total income and expenditure of the Department, the sites and localities

of educational institutions, the number of pupils studying at them, the languages taught, &c. The returns thus contain all the information desirable. One thing alone is wanting, which, if supplied, would add to the value of the returns. Nowhere in the statements is a detail of the books taught in the several kinds of schools to be met with. The addition of a distinct statement, or, at least, of a column in any of the existing statements containing this information, would not be without use. It would give an idea of the kinds of books taught in Government schools, and show what subjects are more largely read, and the grades of proficiency of the pupils of the several classes of school.

Again, in the reports furnished by the Inspectors, there is one thing which the editor thinks specially noteworthy. This is the detail given by the Inspector of the 3rd Circle as to the number of students who left a Tahsílí or Halqábándí School during the year, their grades of proficiency, the reason why they left, and how they have established themselves. If such details were laid down for all the Tahsílí and Halqábándí Schools in the North-Western Provinces, they would serve a very useful end.

Another point which strikes the editor on an examination of the statistical returns is the large number of pupils studying Hindí, compared with that studying Urdú—the latter being about fifty-three or fifty-four thousand, and the former double that number. This is the more remarkable seeing that, while Urdú scholars have the prospects of getting employment in Government offices held out to them, which is a great stimulus to them to make choice of Urdú as their language, Hindí students have no such allurements before them, and the highest hope they can cherish is that they will be appointed as Halqábándí school teachers. That in spite of this disadvantage the number of Hindí pupils is double that of the students of Urdú, shows that Hindí is studied for its own sake, which the editor thinks a very hopeful sign.

In the absence of a statement of studies taught in schools, as suggested above, the editor is not able to determine what proportion of boys in the total number studying Hindi are merely learning the alphabet. But supposing even that the number of beginners exceeds advanced scholars, the argument does not lose force, and this much at least is evident that Natives have begun to appreciate learning irrespective of the worldly gain it will bring them.

The *Urdú Akhbār*, of the same date, asserts that in the boarding-house attached to the Delhi College complaints of theft are very frequent. The boarders often lose many of their things. The writer ascribes this to the rooms of the boarding-house being connected together, without having any doors to separate them from one another, and to the fact that each room is occupied by six boarders. Such an arrangement makes it easy enough for any of them to steal. The writer is of opinion that each boarder should be provided with a separate room—a plan which will also enable the boarders to pay undivided attention to their books and teach them studious habits.

The *Shola-i-Túr*, of the 2nd May, in its column of local news, notices the closing of the Government Zillah School for a month, from May 1st, on account of the midsummer vacation. It is remarked that formerly this vacation commenced on the 15th May, which was a fit date for the vacation to begin, on account of the rainy season setting in by that time, and the hot winds ceasing to blow. It is not suitable to give the vacation after the 1st May, which is a very bad time for the students to go to their homes; because of the hot winds then prevailing, which are very dangerous, and not only produce diseases but often cause death.

The following Vernacular newspapers have been examined in this report, viz.:

No.	Name of Newspaper	Where Published	Date	Date of Receipt
			1871.	1871.
1	Adhunik Hind,	Lucknow,	April 8th	May 5th
2	Najm-ul-Akhbar,	Meerut,	16th	2nd
3	Matla Akhbar,	Meerut,	16th	30th
4	Khair Khwah-i-Panjab,	Gujaranwalla,	3rd week.	30th
5	Rohilkhund Akhbar,	Muradabad,	22nd	2nd
6	Gwalior Gazette,	Gwalior,	23rd	30th
7	Matla-i-Nur,	Jodhpore,	24th	2nd
8	Matla-i-Nur,	Cawnpore,	24th	2nd
9	Dabul-i-Sikandar,	Rampore,	24th	3rd
10	Saharunpore Gazette,	Saharunpore,	24th	3rd
11	Najm-ul-Akhbar,	Meerut,	24th	6th
12	Qudus Akhbar,	Bucknow,	25th	2nd
13	Nasim-i-Jaunpore,	Jaunpore,	25th	2nd
14	Akhbar-i-Azam,	Delhi,	26th	2nd
15	Benares Akhbar,	Benares,	27th	30th
16	Akhbar-i-Azam,	Meerut,	27th	2nd
17	Najm-i-Akhar,	Bijnor,	27th	2nd
18	Allypore Institute Gazette,	Allypore,	28th	1st
19	Lawrence Gazette,	Meerut,	28th	2nd
20	Rajputana Social Science Congress,	Jaipore,	28th	3rd
21	Khair Khwah-i-Panjab,	Gujaranwalla,	4th week.	April 30th
22	Majma-ul-Bahrain,	Ludhiana,	29th	May 2nd
23	Urdi Delhi Gazette,	Agra,	29th	2nd
24	Koh-i-Nur,	Lahore,	29th	2nd
25	Panjabi Akhbar,	Ditto,	29th	3rd
26	Rohilkhund Akhbar,	Muradabad,	29th	5th
27	Agra Akhbar,	Agra,	30th	5th
28	Nur-ul-Absar,	Allahabad,	1st	3rd
29	Benares Gazette,	Benares,	1st	4th
30	Urdi Akhbar,	Delhi,	1st	5th
31	Dabul-i-Sikandar,	Rampore,	1st	5th
32	Matla-i-Nur,	Cawnpore,	1st	5th
33	Samaga Vinod,	Nynee Tal,	1st	5th
34	Karnamah,	Lucknow,	1st	5th
35	Najm-ul-Akhbar,	Meerut,	1st	6th
36	Nasim-i-Jaunpore,	Jaunpore,	2nd	5th
37	Shola-i-Tar,	Cawnpore,	2nd	6th

ALLAHABAD: **SUBHAN TAL**,
 The 1st May, 1871. **Off. Govt. Reporter to the Vernacular Press of Upper India.**